



## 6/11/19 Project Kickoff Meeting Summary:

On Tuesday, June 11, 2019, the City of Northfield (Nate Carlson and Mikayla Schmidt) and Strong & Starlike (Tisidra Jones and Maggie McKenna) held the Project Kickoff Meeting at the City of Northfield's office. The bullet points below provide a summary of our discussion.

- **Check In Question:** The following check in question was asked *"In the last two weeks, what are you noticing in your world that relates to this project?"*. The group discussed shifts taking place in their communities related to climate, race, New American communities and creativity/ innovation. In addition, the group touched on demographic shifts taking place at regional and national levels that relate to the scope of the project.
- **Discussion: Information Gathering Review Questions:** The bulk of the conversation occurred under this agenda item. Clarifying questions were asked on information shared to date. Bullets below summarize responses:
  - **EDA's Role/ Community Development Department & Staff Roles/Existing Programs & Services:** (1) Staff furthering the work of the Community Development Department and the EDA seek to recruit, grow and retain new businesses; (2) Capital related offerings: Micro-grants are available; a revolving loan program exists; strategies pertaining to gap financing; (3) permits, building inspection and zoning related questions are fielded by Community Development Department staff liaisons to the EDA; (4) business development and business coaching is also available – the Northfield Enterprise Center offers such assistance; (5) staff help others navigate government processes and systems as well as facilitate conversations across stakeholders; and (6) staff have been participating in GARE (Government Alliance on Racial and Equity) – things have slowed down a little in recent months, but hoping to continue this work.
  - **Areas with Opportunities to Build on Work Done to Date:** Communication discussed in the following areas (1) wondering about efficiencies related to materials in existing toolkits; (2) interest in whether certain updates made to the website may assist in connections with communities engaged through this project; and (3) exploring efforts related to interpretation and translation. It was noted that to their understanding, an entrepreneurial ecosystem map has not been completed. We discussed how this may aid in communication regarding navigating systems and opportunities.
  - **Defining Terminology to Ensure Alignment:** Some language/terms/acronyms have multiple meanings in different industries. We sought to ensure we were all on the same page regarding language and defined the following:
    - **Targeted Business:** The State of Minnesota Department of Administration has a specific definition for a "targeted group" business. Here, the City of Northfield was not using that definition. A targeted business in this context relates to the general economy of the City of Northfield and businesses that could do well there based off of available



business opportunities by industries and sectors. This may include, but is not limited to, health and medical technology related businesses.

- **Incentive Package:** With a number of different types of incentive programs and packages we wanted to confirm what was intended in the documents shared. Incentive packages as it relates to this project included but may not be limited to the following: (1) creating new grant opportunities; (2) micro-financing options; (3) ways to leverage existing capital / funds available. This conversation concluded with the following summary of goals: (1) providing capital; (2) providing networking opportunities for businesses and (3) supporting internal growth for businesses.
- **Minority, Women and Veteran-Owned Businesses & the Project Scope:** Throughout the materials shared minority-owned (MBE), women-owned (WBE), veteran-owned businesses (VO/VBE), and immigrant-owned businesses were all discussed. Some communities and industries may combine MWBEs/VO businesses when discussing targeted businesses. In addition, MBEs include a wide range of races and ethnicities. We sought to confirm the scope and goals of who the committee is seeking to engage. Although the committee is charged with addressing efforts for MWVBEs, the scope of this project is focusing on MBEs and immigrant-owned businesses.
- **Revisiting Project Overview, Scope Review, Goals and Defining Success:** We revisited the proposal structure and scope and goals of engagements. We discussed that the July 8<sup>th</sup> meeting with the committee is not a hard date and can be moved to late July to allow for more time for engagements. We agree to make that move. We currently have a check in call scheduled for Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m. **Question: May we look to having that afternoon serve as the committee meeting?**
- **Community Engagement:** Prior to the Kickoff, an engagement list with 15 businesses was shared. To date, Nate and Mar met with El Triunfo. No other businesses on the list have been engaged. A majority of the business owners on the list would be new relationships and the business owners have not been alerted to this engagement. We discussed engaging Mar Valdecantos and Chris Whillock prior to contacting those on the list to determine whether they have pre-existing relationships with any of the business owners. It was also noted that phone may be better than e-mail for engaging business owners. Lastly, we discussed business visits conducted by staff and the materials and documentation used for that.
- **Confirming Roles:** For the project, Nate will serve as the primary point of contact. He is willing to help make connections where able. Mikayla is happy to take on tasks and identify systematic nuances that are tougher to navigate. As it relates to the committee, all committee members have some type of expertise and may be of assistance, with the caveat that they may not be able to put in as much time. We discussed using the July meeting to get a pulse on where committee members may be willing to plug in and/or continue beyond the scope of this project. As noted in the scope discussion, Strong & Starlike will focus on facilitating the information gathering



and business interviews; summarizing the information and stories shared; and providing recommendations. Our check in calls will also be a space to coach and make connections.

### Additional Information Gathering Questions:

During the meeting we mentioned that we would share additional information gathering questions. Below are several questions we have, currently:

- It appears that the City of Northfield is due for an updated comprehensive plan and may be in that process now. Is that correct?
- Has the Committee met since the contract was awarded for this project?
- Do you currently have regional relationships/partnerships with community development financial institutions, regional banks and the Federal Reserve Bank?
- Through the committee minutes it looks like there was a desire to connect with LEDC. Did this happen?
- Do you have relationships with any of the following?
  - The Consulate of Mexico in Saint Paul
  - CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio)
  - LegalCORPS
  - MMGSA (Minnesota Minority Goods and Services Association)
  - NAMC (National Association of Minority Contractors)
  - WBDC (Women's Business Development Center)
  - AWC (Association of Women Contractors)
  - SCORE
  - LISC (Local Initiative Support Corporation)
  - Minnesota Department of Administration
- Do you have a sense of how many minority business owners are members of the Northfield Area Chamber of Commerce?
- Questions Pertaining to the City of Northfield Strategic Plan: From the focus group / joint meeting with City Council, EDA and Planning Commission 2 key takeaways were to (1) address business challenges and (2) noted that west business area is not supported. Do you know what those challenges were the plan was highlighting, and has the City of Northfield started addressing those? Are west business area businesses on your list?
- Questions Pertaining to the EDA 2018-2020 Work Plan:
  - Are you all on track with the timelines established in the work plan?
  - The work plan mentions infill development related incentives. Is this something you are thinking about regarding MBEs?
  - Are you considering infill development as a neighborhood revitalization strategy? If so, are you considering ways that arts and culture connect with this, especially in light of increasing Latinx community and number of restaurants on your list?
  - Page 6 of the Work Plan mentions Cultural Districts – what is the vision on that? Are you familiar with the Cultural Destination Area plans in the Twin Cities in the recent comp plans for Minneapolis and Saint Paul?



- Questions pertaining to systems and infrastructure:
  - What data tracking systems do you have in place to track the following with minority-owned businesses?
    - Contracting dollars spent with MBEs, loans to MBEs, and grants to MBEs
    - Disaggregation of minority-owned business data (breaking out spends, loans, grants to, for example, Asian-owned businesses, African-owned businesses, African-American-owned businesses, Hispanic / Latinx-owned businesses)
  - Have you ever or do you intend to set Small Business or MWVBE contracting goals on development projects or purchases for goods and services?
- Goals moving forward:
  - The EDA Work Plan mentions seeking to have business owners and property owners have a strong connection to staff and resource providers. How are you all defining a strong connection? Have you had an opportunity to define it?
  - Imagine it is two years from now. How are you defining success for this project?

### Check In Calls & Coaching:

During the meeting we discuss the check in calls as a space for some level of coaching. During our last meeting we talked briefly about the following. We can revisit these items in further detail in during our upcoming calls if additional questions remain:

- City of Saint Paul [Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\)](#)
- City of Saint Paul [STAR Program](#)
- Department of Administration TG/ED/VO [certified business list](#)
- Ecosystem mapping

### Next Steps:

The following next steps were identified during the Kickoff Meeting:

- City of Northfield:
  - Language interpretation and translation services: Maggie asked a question regarding what is available as we connect with people. Nate indicated he could look into this.
  - If you have notes from the business interview with El Triunfo, would you please share those?
- Strong & Starlike:
  - Share meeting summary and information gathering questions within 5 business days (complete)
  - E-mail Mar Valdecantos and Chris Whillock to connect prior to contacting business owners (complete). Update: we received a response from Mar and are scheduling for this week; we have not yet heard from Chris. If we do not hear from Chris by late this week then we will seek your assistance for a nudge.
  - Design for engagements
  - After connecting with Ms. Valdecantos and Mr. Whillock, start engaging businesses on the list